

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and following remarks, reconsideration and further examination are requested.

The specification and abstract have been reviewed and revised to make editorial changes thereto and generally improve the form thereof, and a substitute specification and abstract are provided. No new matter has been added by the substitute specification and abstract.

Subject to the Examiner's approval Figs. 1, 3, 4 and 6 will be corrected as shown in red on the attached sheets and Fig. 7 will be provided as shown in red.

Without acquiescing to the correctness of the new matter issues raised by the Examiner, and solely to further advance prosecution of this application, claims 10, 15, 20 and 23 have been cancelled and claims 26-39 have been added. New claims 26-39 generally correspond to claims 8, 9, 11-14, 16-19, 21, 22, 24 and 25, respectively, as presented with the response filed September 6, 2002, with sole independent claim 26 reciting an additional feature so as to distinguish this claim from the references relied upon by the Examiner.

Specifically, claim 26 recites that the container body includes a first end defined by a tapered end portion

having a rounded distal end such that said container body cannot be supported in an upright position by said rounded distal end when said rounded distal end is placed on a support surface.

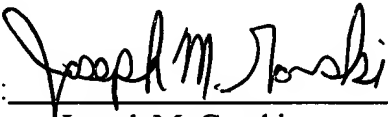
In Zeman the container body 12 is shown to have a flat or non-round bottom 20, and in Zimmer the container body 12 is also shown to have a flat or non-round bottom 28. Similarly, Sequin also discloses a container body which has a flat or non-round bottom. Accordingly, any combination of these references would not result in the invention as now recited in claim 26. Thus, claims 26-39 are allowable.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance and an early Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

If after reviewing this Amendment, the Examiner believes that any issues remain which must be resolved before the application can be passed to issue, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative by telephone to resolve such issues.

Respectfully submitted,

Katsuei TANABE et al.

By: 

Joseph M. Gorski
Registration No. 46,500
Attorney for Applicants

JMG/edg
Washington, D.C. 20006-1021
Telephone (202) 721-8200
Facsimile (202) 721-8250
August 27, 2003

PACKAGING CONTAINER

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

5 **[0001]** The present invention relates to a packaging container and, more particularly, to a packaging container having a container body for containing confectionery and a lid capable of hermetically sealing the container body.

Description of the Related Art

10 **[0002]** A known packaging container intended for use as a confectionery container has a container body having a shape substantially resembling an inverted cone and an open end corresponding to a bottom of the inverted cone, and a lid for hermetically sealing the container body. In some packaging containers of this kind, a label having printed thereon a picture of confectionery contained in the packaging container, a trademark and the like is affixed to a side surface of the container body.

15 **[0003]** Such a confectionery container is held by one hand and confectionery contained in the confectionery container is taken out by the other hand for eating.

20 **[0004]** Since the container body of this confectionery container has a shape substantially resembling the shape of an inverted cone, the confectionery container is unable to hold itself in an upright position on a table or the like. The confectionery container must be supported on a stand or the like to place the same in an upright position on a table or the like.

25

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to solve the problem of the prior art confectionery container, and to provide a packaging container having a container body of a shape substantially resembling an inverted cone, and capable of supporting itself on a surface and enabling removal of its contents even if the container body is not held by hand.

[0006] With the foregoing object in view, the present invention provides a packaging container including a container body formed of a shape substantially resembling an inverted cone and having a tapered end portion and an open end opposite the tapered end portion, a lid for hermetically sealing the container body, and a frustum-shaped exterior shell removably fitted on the container body. When the exterior shell is removed from the container body and is inverted and a tapered end portion of the container body is inserted in the inverted exterior shell, the container body is supported by the exterior shell.

[0007] The exterior shell is fixedly fitted on the side wall of the container body when the packaging container containing confectionery is sold. When removing the confectionery contained in the packaging container, the exterior shell is removed from the container body and is inverted, and a tapered end portion of the container body is inserted into the inverted exterior shell so as to support the container body by the exterior shell. Thus, the container body of a shape substantially resembling an inverted cone can be supported by the exterior shell on a support surface without requiring any stand.

[0008] Preferably, a smaller end of the exterior shell is held fast to a side wall of the container body when the exterior shell is fitted onto the container body. Since the exterior shell has the shape of a frustum, the exterior shell can be firmly held on the container body by fastening the same to the container body only by a small end thereof, and a larger end of the exterior shell does not need to be held fast to the

side wall of the container body. Therefore, the exterior shell can be easily removed from the container body.

[0009] Preferably, the smaller end of the exterior shell as fitted on the container body is lightly bonded to the side wall of the container body. Thus, the exterior shell can be easily removed from the container body, inverted and used for supporting the container body.

[0010] Preferably, protrusions are formed along the outer surface of the side wall of the container body and the smaller end of the exterior shell engages the protrusions when the exterior shell is fitted onto the container body. The engagement of the smaller end of the exterior shell with the protrusions of the container body secures the exterior shell in place when the exterior shell is fitted onto the container body. Thus, the exterior shell can be easily removed from the container body, inverted and used for supporting the container body. The exterior shell can be easily fitted onto the container body again.

[0011] Preferably, the exterior shell is formed to be of an axial length such that a tip of the tapered end portion of the container body fitted into the inverted exterior shell is spaced from a support surface. Thus, the exterior shell functions as a stand and supports the container body so that the tip thereof is spaced from the support surface.

[0012] Preferably, the protrusions are formed on the side wall of the container body at positions on the side of the tapered end portion of the container body with respect to an axially middle portion of the side wall of the container body. Thus, the tip of the container body can be spaced from a support surface when the smaller end of the exterior shell engages the protrusions.

[0013] Preferably, the protrusions are arranged at intervals or continuously as a ring in a plane perpendicular to an axis of the container body. The projections give an esthetic effect to the design of the container body in addition to a functional effect.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0014] Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a packaging container in a preferred embodiment according to the present invention, in which a lid is removed;

[0015] Fig. 2 is a perspective view of a lid included in the packaging container shown in Fig. 1;

[0016] Fig. 3 is a perspective view of the packaging container shown in Fig. 1 in a sealed state;

[0017] Fig. 4 is a sectional view of the packaging container shown in Fig. 3 taken on line A-B-C in Fig. 5;

[0018] Fig. 5 is a plan view of the lid;

[0019] Fig. 6 is a side elevational view of a packaging container in a modification of the packaging container shown in Fig. 1; and

[0020] Fig. 7 is a partial view showing a modification of the packaging containers shown in Figs. 1 and 6.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0021] Packaging containers in preferred embodiments according to the present invention will be described hereinafter with reference to the accompanying drawings.

[0022] As shown in Figs. 1 to 5, a packaging container 1 in a first embodiment according to the present invention includes a container body 2, a lid 3 and a exterior shell 4.

[0023] The container body 2 is provided along an outer circumference of its side wall with eight esthetic, longitudinal grooves 7 extending from a brim of an open end 6 thereof to a middle portion of the side wall.

[0024] A plurality of semispherical small protrusions 8, six semispherical small protrusions in this embodiment, are formed along the outer circumference of the side wall of the container body 2. The small protrusions 8 are arranged in a plane perpendicular to an axis of the container body 2. The protrusions 8 are formed at positions on a side of a tapered end portion 5 of the container body 2 with respect to an axially middle portion of the side wall of the container body 2. The protrusions 8 may be esthetically arranged at intervals in the plane perpendicular to the axis of the container body 2, or may be arranged continuously as a ring 8' as shown in Fig. 7. The protrusions 8 can be formed so as to exercise a function to engage a smaller end of the exterior shell 4 and also to give an esthetic effect to the design of the container body 2. The tapered end portion 5 has a rounded distal end 9 such that the container body 2 cannot be supported in an upright position by the rounded distal end when the rounded distal end is placed on a support surface.

[0025] As shown in Fig. 1, confectionery 15, such as chips of confectionery, is contained in the container body 2.

[0026] The lid 3 is put on the container body 2 so as to seal the open end 6 of the container body 2. The lid 3 is provided on its upper surface with a knob 3a. The lid 3 is put on the container body 2 to close the open end 6, and is taken off the container body 2 to open the open end 6, by holding the knob 3a between fingers and either lifting or lowering the lid.

[0027] The exterior shell 4 is formed in the shape of a frustum having a smaller end and a larger end by adhesively joining together opposite ends of a paper sheet or the like. The exterior shell 4 can be used as a label for showing a picture of confectionery contained in the packaging container 1, a trademark and the like. In Fig. 1, a picture, a trademark and the like printed on the surface of the exterior shell 4 are omitted.

[0028] As shown in Fig. 3, the smaller end of the exterior shell 4 is on an upper side of the protrusions 8 and the larger end of the exterior shell is in close contact with a portion of the side wall of the container body 2 near the open end 6 of the container body 2 before the packaging container 1 is opened. The larger end of the exterior shell 4 is not joined adhesively to the container body 2. Since the exterior shell 4 has the shape of a frustum, the exterior shell 4 can be securely held on the container body 2 by fitting the exterior shell 4 on the container body 2 so that only the smaller end thereof engages the container body firmly and the larger end thereof is in loose engagement with the container body 2. Thus, the exterior shell 4 can be easily removed from the container body 2.

[0029] The exterior shell is formed to be a predetermined axial length, such that a tip of the tapered end portion 5 of the container body 2 fitted in the exterior shell 4 in an inverted condition is spaced apart from a support surface on which the exterior shell is placed. The axial length of the exterior shell 4 is, for example, greater than half the axial length of the container body 2.

[0030] The smaller end of the exterior shell 4 is disengaged from the protrusions 8 and the exterior shell 4 can be removed from the container body 2 by pulling the exterior shell 4 toward the tip of the tapered end portion 5. The exterior shell 4 removed from the container body 2 is inverted and a tapered end portion of the container body 2 is inserted through the smaller end in the exterior shell 4. Then, the smaller end of the exterior shell 4 engages lower portions of the protrusions 8 as shown in Fig. 1, and the exterior shell 4 serves as a stand for supporting the container body 2 on a support surface. When leaving the confectionery 15 half eaten, so as to eat the residual confectionery 15 later, the exterior shell 4 in a state shown in Fig. 1 is removed from the container body 2, is inverted and is fitted onto the container body 2 as shown in Fig. 3, and the lid 3 is put on the container body 2 to close the open end 6 of the container body 2.

[0031] Thus, the container body 2 having a shape substantially resembling an inverted cone can be supported on a support surface by the exterior shell 4.

5 [0032] The exterior shell 4 serves as a support, as well as a label when printed on it is a picture of the confectionery contained in the container body 2, a trademark and the like.

[0033] The exterior shell 4 can be easily removed from the container body 2 because the exterior shell 4 is retained on the container body 2 only by the smaller end engaging upper portions of the protrusions 8 and can be used as a stand as shown in Fig. 1. When necessary, the exterior shell 4 can be fitted again on the container body 2 as shown in Fig. 3.

10 [0034] Fig. 6 shows a packaging container in a modification of the packaging container 1 shown in Figs. 1 to 5, in which parts like or corresponding to those of the packaging container 1 shown in Figs. 1 to 5 are denoted by the same reference characters and the description thereof will be omitted. As shown in Fig. 6, an exterior shell 4 may be fitted on a container body 2 and may be held on the container body 2 by lightly bonding a smaller end portion 10 of the exterior shell, with an adhesive or the like, to an outer surface of the container body 2 instead of by engaging the smaller end thereof with protrusions 8 formed on the outer surface of the container body 2 so that the exterior shell 4 can be separated from the container body 2 by applying a small force thereto. The exterior shell 4 is removed from the container body 2 by applying a small force thereto and is inverted. Tapered end portion 5 of the container body 2 is inserted into the inverted exterior shell 4 so as to use the inverted exterior shell 4 as a support. Since the exterior shell 4 has a shape resembling a frustum, the smaller end portion 10 can be fitted onto the container body 2 by passing the tapered end portion 5 through the exterior shell 4 without

using any protrusions. It is troublesome to put the exterior shell 4 once removed from the container body 2 again onto the container body 2 and to bond the smaller end portion 10 lightly again to the container body 2. Therefore, the packaging container shown in Fig. 6 is useful for containing confectionery 15 that is expected to be eaten up all at once.

[0035] Although the invention has been described as applied to packaging containers for containing confectionery, the present invention is not limited thereto in its practical application and may be applied to packaging containers for containing articles other than confectionery, such as pickles and the like.

[0036] As is apparent from the foregoing description, the exterior shell of the packaging container of the present invention can be used as a label and a stand, the container body having a shape substantially resembling an inverted cone can be set alone on the support surface, and the contents, such as confectionery, contained in the container body can be removed without holding the packaging container by hand.